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Nota di contenuto	List of figures -- List of tables -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- ; Part one. The prospect of party system change between elections -- The phenomenon of party and party system change -- How parliamentary party system change matters for policy -- Why and how individual incumbents change legislative party systems -- ; Part two. Discerning mechanisms through case studies -- Legislators' pursuit of benefits and legislative party system change -- Avoidance of electoral costs and stability in parliamentary parties -- ; Part three. Generalizing in a broader empirical setting -- Setting up the analysis of one hundred and ten parliaments -- Institutional inducements and preference-based deterrents to legislative party system change -- Comparative statistics : where our assumptions may not apply -- Conclusions -- ; Bibliography -- Parliamentary records -- Newspapers and periodicals -- Other primary and secondary sources -- Appendixes -- Author Index -- Subject index.
Sommario/riassunto	In this book, Carol Mershon and Olga Shvetsova explore one of the central questions in democratic politics: how much autonomy do elected politicians have to shape and reshape the party system on their own, without the direct involvement of voters in elections? Mershon and Shvetsova's theory focuses on the choices of party membership made by legislators while serving in office. It identifies the inducements and impediments to legislators' changes of partisan affiliation, and integrates strategic and institutional approaches to the study of parties and party systems. With empirical analyses comparing nine countries that differ in electoral laws, territorial governance and executive-legislative relations, Mershon and Shvetsova find that strategic incumbents have the capacity to reconfigure the party system as established in elections. Representatives are motivated to bring about change by opportunities arising during the parliamentary term, and are deterred from doing so by the elemental democratic practice of elections.